

### The 3 Rs — 1890s Style

The activities and information contained on the “Michigan Time Traveler” page in the *Lansing State Journal* and this teacher's guide address the Michigan Framework for Social Studies Education content standards and the social studies portion of MEAP: Standard 1.1 Time and Chronology; Standard 1.2 Comprehending the Past; Standard 1.3 Analyzing and Interpreting the Past.

As students explore the history of one-room schools and 19th century education practices, have them compare and contrast the similarities and changes in education over time. Some questions to ask: What do the “Rules for Teachers” (on the “Time Traveler” page) tell us about how people thought women should act? What was expected of married women?

### CREATE YOUR OWN ONE-ROOM SCHOOL

Create a day in a one-room school in your own classroom. Use these lessons as part of your lesson plan. Conduct your class in the same manner as a school teacher in the 1890s. Divide your students into “grades” (primer, first, second, etc.). Seat boys and girls on opposite sides of the room. Place recitation benches at the front of your classroom. This is an opportunity to explore a variety of subjects: Ask the students what the “Time Traveler” page tells them about school chores and recess activities. Did they have playground equipment? What did they use for heat? What were their chores at home?

Classroom discipline was strict. Everyone knew the rules and they were promptly and firmly enforced. Punishment at school was usually reinforced by punishment at home. Corporal punishment was common and should be discussed. Lesser punishments included: standing in a corner facing the wall; wearing a dunce cap and sitting on the dunce stool; and standing for long periods with the hands held straight out in front. The “nose hole,” a circle drawn on the blackboard, was also used. Students who misbehaved would have to stand with their hands behind their back, nose against the blackboard in the center of the “nose hole.” The circle would be drawn a bit high, so the student would have to stand on their toes; or too low, forcing them to bend at the waist.

### MEMORIZATION AND RECITATION

Memorizing and reciting speeches, poems and lessons was common practice in the 1890s. Teachers believed that the frequent review of lessons permanently fixed information in students' minds and improved articulation and public speaking skills. They also used stories, poems and verses to teach moral lessons.

### HEALTH ALPHABET

(Have each student recite a line.)

As soon as you are up shake blanket and sheet;  
Better be without shoes than sit with wet feet;  
Children, if healthy, are active not still;  
Damp beds and damp clothes will both make you ill;  
Eat slowly and always chew your food well;  
Freshen the air in the house where you dwell;  
Garments must never be made too tight;  
Homes should be healthy, airy and light;  
If you wish to be well, which you do, I've not doubt,  
Just open the windows before you go out;  
Keep the room always tidy and clean;  
Let dust on the furniture never be seen;  
Much illness is caused by the want of pure air;

Now, to open the windows be ever you care;  
Old rags and old rubbish should never be kept;  
People should see that their floors are well swept;  
Quick movements in children are healthy and right;  
Remember the young cannot thrive without light,  
See that the cistern is clean to the brim;  
Take care that your dress is all tidy and trim;  
Use your nose to find if there be a bad drain —  
Very sad are the fevers that come in its train;  
Walk as much as you can without feeling fatigue;  
Xerxes could walk full many a league;  
Your health is your wealth, which your wisdom must keep;  
Zeal will help a good cause, and the good you will reap.

*The Michigan School Monitor* 5:466 (September 4, 1884 - June 6, 1885)

What health concerns does this poem address? Use articles found in the *Lansing State Journal* to compare and contrast health concerns of the health concerns of the past with those of today.

## RECREATIONS IN ARTICULATION

Teachers stressed articulation and public speaking in the daily lessons. Your students can practice articulation by reciting the lines below.

1. His cry moved me.
2. Six thick thistle sticks.
3. A rural ruler truly rural.
4. The sun shines on the shop signs.
5. The sea ceaseth and it sufficeth us.
6. She sells sea-shells; shall he sell sea-shells?
7. A box of mixed biscuits; a mixed biscuit box.
8. Two toads totally tired tried to trot to Tedbury.
9. Shave a cedar shingle thin. What! Shave a cedar shingle thin? Yes, shave a cedar shingle thin.
10. Peter Prangle the prickly, prangly pear picker, picked three pecks of prickly, prangly pears on the pleasant prairies.

## WORDS FOR SPELLING TESTS

Use these spelling words to teach a lesson within a lesson. These words were important in the context of the time period and the culture. Many will be unfamiliar to the students of today. Have students look up these words in a dictionary. Discuss why Mr. Pattengill would have chosen these as the sixty common words every student should know. Discuss why some of these words can not be found in dictionaries today.

- |              |               |               |               |                 |                |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. cornice   | 11. chimneys  | 21. yeast     | 31. clevis    | 41. accordion   | 51. erysipelas |
| 2. vinegar   | 12. jellies   | 22. sieve     | 32. colter    | 42. diphtheria  | 52. alpaca     |
| 3. hominy    | 13. succeed   | 23. seize     | 33. ballot    | 43. tranquility | 53. vaccinate  |
| 4. succotash | 14. precede   | 24. panel     | 34. celery    | 44. dissipate   | 54. collision  |
| 5. porridge  | 15. proceed   | 25. cistern   | 35. separate  | 45. lilies      | 55. excelled   |
| 6. basin     | 16. recede    | 26. zinky     | 36. salad     | 46. billiards   | 56. sensible   |
| 7. pewter    | 17. concede   | 27. emptyings | 37. napkin    | 47. hare-lip    | 57. legible    |
| 8. suet      | 18. supersede | 28. biscuit   | 38. gravy     | 48. exaggerate  | 58. recommend  |
| 9. turkeys   | 19. intercede | 29. knead     | 39. valleys   | 49. tyrannical  | 59. precise    |
| 10. cookies  | 20. bilious   | 30. cellar    | 40. beefsteak | 50. numbskull   | 60. prejudice  |

*A Manual of Orthography and Elementary Sounds, Henry R. Pattengill, 1896*

## NEW AND IMPROVED MANNER OF SPELL DOWN

1. Choose sides.
2. Seat pupils so that those on the opposite sides will alternate.
3. Let all pupils write every word, numbering words carefully on their papers.
4. Spell no word with a capital unless it is one that always requires a capital.
5. After the words are written, let the writer place his name on the paper and pass it to a pupil of the opposing side for correction.
6. Let the teacher give clearly the correct spelling of every word, a check mark being placed after each word missed.
7. Let pupil who corrects a paper place his name to the paper and state the number of the word first missed on the paper he corrects, and also the number of words missed on that paper. A word omitted should be counted missed.
8. Exchange papers again, so that each may have his own paper.
9. Give a minute or two for appeals.
10. Let the two sides stand opposite each other in the room.
11. The teacher says: All who missed the first word may be seated; second word, third and so on, pupils taking their seats as fast as the number of their first word missed is called; so on to the finish. Of course, the last one standing has fairly spelled the school down because he has spelled every word till the one missed.
12. After all are down, ask all to rise in their places again and take this test: All who missed twenty or more words be seated; nineteen, eighteen and so on down to one; in this way ascertain who is the best speller.

## ARITHMETIC

A variety of arithmetic textbooks were available to teachers during the 19th century, teaching the basic principles of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. Lessons were often phrased as story problems reflecting the common problems and experiences of the day. Have your students complete the following story problems. Discuss how each was important to life in the 1890s. Assign students to look up the words that are unfamiliar to them. See definitions and answers below.

- 1. A grocer bought six hogsheads of molasses, containing 117.5 gallons, 124 gallons, 129.3175 gallons, 104.75 gallons, 130.0625 gallons, and 131.5625 gallons. How many gallons of molasses did he buy?**  
A. The grocer bought 737.1925 gallons of molasses. A hogshead is a unit of volume ranging from 63 gallons to 140 gallons.
- 2. What is the area of a piece of land 27 rods long and 12 rods wide?**  
A. The area of the land is 324 rods. A rod is 5.5 yards or 16.5 feet long.
- 3. A furrier received \$400 for buffalo-robies, at \$10 apiece. How many robes did he sell?**  
A. The furrier sold 40 buffalo-robies. A furrier is a man who deals in furs.
- 4. A lumberman banked 110 logs in 5 days. How many logs was that per day?**  
A. The lumberman banked 22 logs per day. Banking logs means to stack them on the river bank to wait for the spring river drive to the sawmill.
- 5. If a Mississippi steamboat burns 7 cords of wood per day, in how many days will she burn 301 cords.**  
A. A Mississippi steamboat will burn 301 cords of wood in 43 days. A cord is a unit of quantity for cut fuel wood. It is equal to a stack measuring 4' x 4' x 8' or 128 cubic feet.
- 6. A boy gave a dollar bill to pay for a slate that cost \$.36, a writing book that cost \$.20, and some ink that cost \$.15. How much change should he receive?**  
A. The boy will receive \$.21 in change.

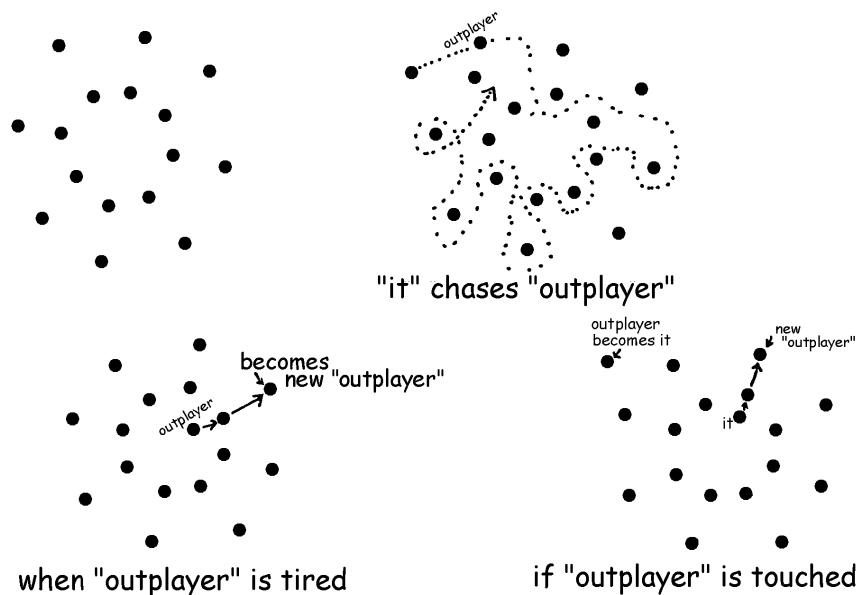
*Harper's Graded Arithmetic - Second Book in Arithmetic, 1882*

## RECESS ACTIVITIES

### OLD-FASHIONED TAG

You will need 18 people to play this game properly.

- Arrange 16 players into a circle 2 deep, leaving enough space between each pair to allow a person to dodge between easily. Everyone should face inward.
- The 2 remaining players are called "it" and the "outplayer." "It" must try to touch the "outplayer," who can dodge in and out or around the ring.
- When the "outplayer" is tired, (s)he can stand in front of one of the players in the inner ring. The player from the inner ring moves back to the outer ring. The player in the outside ring then becomes the "outplayer."
- If the "outplayer" is touched (s)he becomes "it."
- The previous "it" must then stand in front of someone in the inner ring. The player that (s)he stands in front of moves to the outer ring, and the person displaced from the outer ring becomes the next "outplayer."



## FOX AND GEESE

This game requires one base, the fox's den.

- The “fox” cannot move more than a certain distance from his “den!”
- The “geese” run before the den and the fox must catch them as they pass.
- Each player caught becomes one of the fox's cubs, and helps to catch the other players.

## STEP BACK IN TIME

The Michigan Historical Museum will soon be introducing several new education programs! Bring your students to our school exhibit in the “Growing up in Michigan, 1880-1895” gallery for an opportunity to experience the atmosphere of a one-room school. Contact the Michigan Historical Museum Education Unit at (517) 241-4060 for details. Visit us at our Web site: <http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/>.

## LEARN MORE

To learn more about education in Michigan, Henry R. Pattengill and one-room schools, visit the Michigan Historical Museum. Look for these books at the Library of Michigan, the State of Michigan Archives, the Museum Store or your local bookstore.

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